

WASHINGTON, D.C. - Congressman Sam Farr (D-Carmel) on Thursday voted to pass the Agriculture Appropriations bill, which will fund the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Food and Drug Administration for fiscal year 2010. The House version of the bill includes a wide range of programs that will affect California and the Central Coast.

"Agriculture is the single largest industry on the Central Coast, bringing more than \$4 billion in sales to our area," Rep. Farr said. "I'm proud that this bill funds programs that are very important to our farmers and the health of our nation as a whole."

Local and regional projects:

- Salinas Agricultural Research Station: \$3,654,000. These funds will go toward replacing the USDA agriculture research facility that is currently making do with World War II era structures.
- Water Quality Protection Program for Monterey Bay Sanctuary: \$400,000. These funds will continue a collaborative approach to protecting the resources of the Monterey Bay Sanctuary while sustaining the economic viability of the agricultural industry.
- Sustainable Agriculture program: \$357,000. This project, administered by the Center for Agroecology & Sustainable Food Systems at the University of California-Santa Cruz, will provide funds for sustainable and organic agriculture research.
- Fresh Produce Food Safety: \$704,000. This competitive research program provides resources to bring together experts to advance scientific knowledge in the sources and causes of food-borne illnesses, focusing on leafy greens, fruits and vegetables.

"The last couple years have been very exciting times for agriculture in our country," Rep. Farr said. "We're finally seeing a shift in federal support from Midwest commodity crops to specialty crops, those fruits and vegetables the government for years has said we should be eating. Nutrition programs are good for our country, and they're good for our local farmers."

In addition to local programs, the bill included a range of other national programs:

- \$7.5 billion for the Women, Infants and Children nutrition program, which provides food and nutrition services to 10 million people.

- \$180 million for the Commodity Supplemental Food Program, providing nutritious food to more than 500,000 low-income individuals who struggle with rising food costs.
- \$61.3 billion for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (formerly known as food stamps). Funds will help increase elderly participation in the program.
- \$2.8 billion for rural development programs including rural housing, water projects, community facilities and economic development efforts.
- \$980.3 million for conservation programs, helping improve service in the field, deliver conservation to protect the environment and upgrade aging dams.

The bill, which passed by a vote of 266-160, awaits Senate consideration. Once the Senate acts, the two versions will be reconciled, then sent to the president for signature.

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